



Shared Goals:

Early Childhood Council Strategic Plan and aligned opportunities within the new federal education law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Summary:

- While there are many opportunities within ESSA to secure resources for early learning programs and services, most funding opportunities are **discretionary** in nature and **not federally mandated**. **Decisions on whether to utilize resources for early learning services will be made at the state and local levels.**
 - o ESSA offers Local Education Agencies (LEAs) more flexibility through allowable expenditures with federal funding. Our State Education Agency (SEA), the state's Department of Education, can enable LEAs to use their funds towards a number of early learning initiatives.ⁱ
- At the same time, ESSA **requires the input and engagement of families and communities** in virtually every major local policy and resource decision. Therefore, **it is critical that early learning advocates and stakeholders mobilize families** to engage closely with local and state agencies as they develop their plans for ESSA implementation to ensure resources and opportunities are made available to early learning providers and services.
 - o The provided list of potential actions is not exhaustive; it is critical that early learning advocates and stakeholders identify and suggest next steps for state support of LEAs.

<u>ECC Strategic Plan Goals (2013-2018)</u>		ESSA Opportunities	Potential Action Steps for SEA
Goal 1: A Healthy Start for All Children	Provide high-quality developmental screening and follow-up services	Title II: ESSA <i>allows</i> the US Secretary of Education to provide funding for programs that support the development of literacy skills in low-income communities, including pediatric literacy programs. ⁱⁱ Title IV authorizes competitive funding for Promise Neighborhoods and Full Service Community Schools – both of which must provide “ pipeline services ” ⁱⁱⁱ	Inventory current pediatric literacy programs available within district feeder patterns and assess feasibility of expanding services.
	Support children's healthy social-emotional development		
	Strengthen family-centered health and preventive care		
	Expand evidence-based home visiting and family health practices		
Goal 2: High-Quality Early Childhood Programs and Professionals	Achieve high-quality program improvement through Stars	Title IX establishes new preschool development grants ^{iv} within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to be jointly administered with the U.S. Department of Education. The grants are designed to: 1) Support a strategic plan for high-quality early learning 2) encourage partnerships to deliver programs and 3) maximize parental choice.	NOTE: Delaware has chosen not to apply for new preschool development grants at this time and focus on funding other opportunities to strengthen high-quality program improvement through Stars.

	Invest in more highly skilled and well-supported early childhood workforce	<p>Title II: State and local professional development plans and resources <i>may include</i> early learning teachers, principals, and ECE staff, but are not required to do so.^v</p> <p>Title III: authorizes competitive grants to higher education institutions (or other entities) to provide professional development to improve instruction for English learners and support educators working with such students. These program funds <i>may be used to support strategies that promote school readiness of English learners and their transition from early learning programs to elementary school.</i></p>	<p>Create professional learning opportunities to increase public and private sector education professionals' knowledge of early learning competencies and developmentally appropriate practice.</p> <p>Support training of teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, early childhood education program directors, and other early childhood education program providers in efforts to address the transition to elementary school, including issues related to school readiness.</p>
Goal 3: An Aligned and Effective Early Learning System, Birth Through Third Grade	Strengthen family, community, and school engagement in early learning	<p>Stakeholder engagement requirements in ESSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ECE stakeholders <i>can</i> engage in state and local Title I plans, but <i>are not required</i>. - Early childhood agency representation is <i>required</i> for Literacy (LEARN) sub-grants - USED requires representation of parents and families in the state's: Title I plans, Title II grants and applications, state report card development, ELL services, and 21st century community learning grants. 	Determine how early learning programs (public or private) can participate in K-12 communication channels that are targeted at families: websites, social media outlets, mailed written materials.
	Develop and implement unified learning standards and assessments, birth through third grade	Title I: ESSA <i>requires</i> "local coordination ^{vi} " with Head Start programs and <i>allows for</i> local coordination with other ECE providers.	<p>Collaborate with Delaware Head Start programs and other early childhood agencies to create a professional learning series on Head Start performance standards; series available through both 0-5 and K-12 professional development systems.</p> <p>Assess the feasibility of creating a shared database that captures child-level outcome data from early learning through K-12.</p>
	Provide shared programs of preparation and PD for early learning and elementary-grade educators	<p>See Title II professional development note in Goal 2 above.</p> <p>See Title III professional development note in Goal 2 above.</p>	<p>Design professional learning opportunities for educators and administrators on the academic and social-emotional aspects of the transition to elementary school; learning opportunities available through both 0-5 and K-12 professional development systems.</p> <p>Design programs or learning academies to increase the ability of principals and other school leaders to support teachers, teacher leaders, early childhood educators, and other professionals to meet the needs of students through age 8, which may include providing joint</p>

			<p>professional learning and planning activities for educators in preschool programs that address the transition to elementary school.</p> <p>Assess the feasibility of creating a shared professional development tracking system for early learning through K-12 educators.</p>
Goal 4: Sustainable System Improvement	Strengthen governance, service integration, and funding	<p>See Title I “local coordination” note in Goal 3 above.</p> <p>Investment of Title I funds in ECE programs and/or parent & family engagement is <i>permitted</i>, but not required. If districts and schools elect to use Title I funds for ECE programs, the state must address how it will support them in doing so in their Title I plan.</p> <p>Title II: Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) competitive grants are available to help states develop or revise comprehensive literacy instruction plans and provide targeted sub grants to early childhood education programs that ensure high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction for students most in need.</p> <p>Title IV: Charter school program competitive grants <i>allow</i> funds to be used to support charter schools that serve early learners, not just elementary and secondary schools.</p> <p>Title IV Ready to Learn Grants provide competitive funding for education and training materials, including interactive programs & distance learning technologies for preschool and elementary school children.</p> <p>See note on Title IV funding for Promise Neighborhoods and Community Schools in Goal 1 above.</p>	<p>Create state guidance policies and procedures and a resource toolkit for the expansion or creation of preschool district programs.</p> <p>Identify technical assistance to support districts with creation of their Title I early learning plans using state expansion toolkit (referenced above).</p> <p>Professional learning opportunities for educators and administrators on meeting and working with families on bidirectional education for students; learning opportunities available through both 0-5 and K-12 professional development systems.</p>
	Implement continual improvement in state services	Title I: State report cards must include the number and percentage of students enrolled in any programs serving children less than age 6	Amend state report cards and school profiles to include preschool programs.
	Mobilize community partnerships and public commitment	See stakeholder engagement requirements for ESSA under Goal 3.	

ⁱ **Local educational agency:** As defined in ESEA, a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools (<http://www.ed.gov/race-top/district-competition/definitions>).

ⁱⁱ **Examples of pediatric literacy programs include:** Medical providers trained in research-based early language and literacy promotion; Books for families and recommendations to parents about reading aloud; Services during well-child visits starting in infancy

ⁱⁱⁱ **Examples of pipeline services include:** High-quality early childhood education programs; support for a child's transition to elementary school, as well as other transition points; family and community engagement and supports; social, health, nutrition, and mental health services and supports

^{iv} **There are two types of pre-school development grants** – initial grants (1 year) for needs assessment, planning, and initial implementation; and renewal grants (up to 3 years) for states that have already received preschool development grants in previous years.

^v **Professional development examples include:** improving ability of principals and other school leaders to meet needs of children through age 8; early grades instructional knowledge and child progress measurement for teachers, principals & school leaders; joint learning and planning on transition for school staff and early childhood educators; other evidence-based activities

^{vi} **Examples of local coordination include:** Developing/implementing process for receiving children's records; Communicating between school, Head Start and early childhood education programs; Conducting meetings with parents, school teachers, Head Start and early childhood teachers to discuss the needs of individual children; Joint transition-related training of school staff, Head Start program staff and early childhood education program staff; Linking LEA and Head Start educational services; Joint funding for pre-kindergarten and Head Start services at public schools.